

## **Historic, archived document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.





# FOREIGN AGRICULTURE CIRCULAR

OFFICE OF FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL RELATIONS  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

1948  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FIM 6-48

October 18, 1948

## HOG SLAUGHTERINGS IN SPECIFIED COUNTRIES, PRELIMINARY 1948 and PROSPECTIVE 1949

Commercial or inspected hog slaughter in the United States and other principal producing countries in 1948 is expected to drop about 4 percent below 1947, according to estimates summarized by the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations. Slaughterings in 1948 are about 9 percent lower than the prewar average. Prospective slaughter for 1949 is expected to be considerably larger than in 1948. A generally improved feed situation in most of the hog producing countries is favorable to expansion of hog production and several countries have already reported increases in numbers of bred sows or in breeding intentions. The 1949 slaughter, barring unforeseen developments, may reach the prewar level.

Larger feed supplies in the United States and a generally improved feed situation in Europe in 1948 is likely to be reflected in a substantial increase in commercial hog slaughter in the latter part of 1949 and early in 1950. The United States is expected to provide the largest numerical increase, with moderate increases occurring in most of the other hog producing countries. Australia and New Zealand are not expected to show any increase, but to hold present levels. Slaughter in Canada will show some decline in 1949.

The largest decrease in hog slaughter in 1948 is occurring in the United States because of the short corn **crop** in 1947 and high prices for feed in the past year. Decreases that are also taking place in Denmark, Netherlands, Eire and Czechoslovakia are the result of short feed supplies. These decreases more than offset the minor increases that are expected in Canada, Mexico, Cuba, South America and European countries.

European commercial hog slaughter in 1948 is expected to recover to about 40 percent of its **prewar** volume. Australia and New Zealand can be expected to attain about 70 percent of prewar slaughter. The Union of South Africa, on the other hand, may double its prewar slaughter. South America will increase its slaughter by more than one-half and North America will exceed prewar volume by almost one-third.

The United Kingdom, the principal importer of pork and pork products, had smaller foreign pork supplies to draw from in 1948 than in 1947. Its principal sources were Denmark, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Other European countries during the year competed for pork supplies produced on the continent. No pork or pork products of any significance were imported from Argentina in 1948.

Slaughter data in Eastern, Central and some of the Southern European countries and in the Soviet Union are not available for the post-war years. Most of these countries have reported ambitious plans for expanding hog numbers, but the extent to which these have succeeded is not known. However, it can be assumed that an improved feed situation would have increased hog slaughterings in these countries.



Preliminary data on hog slaughter in the United States for 1948 indicate that inspected slaughter is expected to decline more than 9 percent from a year earlier. This, however, is about 28 percent above the 1934-38 average. Total hog slaughter in 1948, on the other hand, is over 6 percent below a year ago, but about 22 percent above prewar.

Notwithstanding the reduced corn crop in 1947 and the high prices for corn in the early part of this year, the 1948 spring pig crop of 51.4 million head was only 3 percent below the 1947 spring crop. Hog slaughter in the last quarter of this year is likely to be less than that in October-December 1947. Consequently, as a result of the large corn crop, farmers are likely to hold out more gilts for breeding stock and to hold back more hogs for feeding to higher weights.

In June, 1948, farmers' intentions were to breed about the same number of sows for fall farrowing as in June, 1947. However, the Department of Agriculture, in its 1948 fall pig goal recommended breeding 10 percent more sows for farrowing than last year. This may result in a small increase in hog slaughter in the fall of 1949.

Because of the large corn crop and the more favorable hog-corn price relationship, farmers can be expected to breed a larger number of sows and to farrow a larger number of pigs next spring. In view of these favorable conditions and the continued demand for meat, the Department of Agriculture has suggested 60 million pigs as a goal for the 1949 spring pig crop. This would be an increase of 17 percent over the 1948 spring crop. Based on this general situation, hog slaughter in 1949, particularly during the latter part of the year, can be expected to be somewhat larger than in 1948.

Inspected hog slaughter in Canada for 1948 is estimated at 4.5 million head, an increase of about one percent above the previous year and 39 percent larger than the 1934-38 average. Hog slaughterings in 1948 showed some increase, owing to the hold-over of hogs from the last few months of 1947, due to the packing-house strike, shortage of feed earlier in the year, and a very unfavorable hog-barley price ratio during the latter part of 1947.

Concurrently with the increased slaughter and liquidation of hogs, the 1948 spring and fall pig crops dropped 20 to 22 percent, respectively, from those of the previous year. With higher prices for hogs, more favorable grain supplies and larger feed supplies available, as a result of the lifting of the embargo on cattle and sheep, it is still questionable whether the downward trend will be checked in 1949. Consequently, hog slaughterings in 1949 can be expected to be smaller than those of 1948.

Commercial hog slaughterings in Mexico for 1948 are estimated to be slightly larger than in 1947. According to this estimate, the 1948 slaughterings are about 55 percent larger than the average for the 1934-38 period. However, due to the increased domestic demand for pork and continuation of the foot-and-mouth disease eradication program, it is believed that hog slaughterings in 1949 are likely to remain near the present 1948 level.

Hog slaughter in Cuba for 1948 is estimated to have increased about 10 percent over a year earlier. This estimate is approximately 57 percent above the 1934-38 average. An abundant supply of feed, particularly of palmiche nuts from the Cuban royal palm tree in 1947 and a continuance of ample feed supplies in 1948 encouraged farmers to feed hogs to a higher marketable weight. Recent shortages of beef and premium prices paid for pork were also factors which contributed materially to the increased hog slaughterings in 1948. It is anticipated that hog slaughterings in 1949 will decrease because of lower consumer buying power, probably more normal supplies of beef, and larger quantities of other low priced food stores which may decrease the demand for pork.

Hog marketings in the United Kingdom, excluding Northern Ireland, is expected to increase substantially in 1948 and commercial slaughter for the year is estimated to be nearly 19 percent higher than a year ago. Present slaughter, however, is only about one-sixth of the four-year prewar average. The downward trend in hog slaughter apparently has been checked because of an improved feed position, some increase in numbers, and a large increase in bred-sows over a year ago. In view of the general outlook at this time, the prospective slaughter for 1949 may be substantially increased, but it is likely to remain more than two-thirds below prewar.

Commercial hog slaughter for Eire in 1948 is estimated to be nearly 10 percent lower than last year. This year's slaughter, however, is only about 36 percent of the prewar level. If adequate quantities of imported corn are available during the coming year, a substantial increase in slaughter can be anticipated in 1949.

In 1948, hog slaughter for export in Denmark is expected to be around 14 percent below that of a year earlier and about 40 percent of prewar. Drought conditions and short feed supplies in 1947, together with inadequate export prices for bacon, caused farmers to breed fewer sows for farrowing last fall and this spring. Consequently, slaughter dropped to a low level in 1948. At the present time, however, the situation is reversed. The improved feed situation and the upward adjustment in the export price of bacon in 1948 have encouraged farmers to increase the number of bred-sows. Moderate recovery is anticipated and hog slaughter may in 1949 be substantially larger the latter part of the year.

Although the 1947 drought in Norway was rather severe and materially reduced feed supplies, it is believed that commercial hog slaughter will show a small increase. This increase may be due to hogs being shifted from home to commercial slaughter channels, since it is believed that during the occupation, shifts to home slaughter from commercial slaughter channels were considerable.

Hog slaughter for Sweden in 1948 showed an increase of about 18 percent over a year earlier, but it is still around 12 percent below the 1934-38 period. The increase in slaughter indicates an over-expansion in the spring of 1947 in relation to availability of feed supplies at that time. However, with the feed situation somewhat improved and bred-sows being maintained at relatively higher levels for the first five months of 1948, than in 1946, hog slaughter in 1949 is likely to be a little larger than in 1948.

In the Netherlands, total official hog slaughter in 1948 was over 20 percent below the previous year and about two-fifths of the 1934-38 average. Short feed supplies in 1946 and 1947, and reduced hog numbers in 1947, together with gilts held back for breeding, will result in smaller slaughter in 1948. Some slight upturn in hog numbers is occurring in 1948, as a result of a better feed situation. Hog slaughter in 1949 is expected to indicate some recovery.

Total hog slaughter in Belgium in 1948, is believed to be a little larger than in 1947. Present slaughter, apparently, is about 60 percent of the 1934-38 average. The May census of this year indicates that hog numbers and bred-sows show an increase over a year earlier. If feed conditions continue favorable, slaughterings in 1949 are likely to be somewhat larger than in 1948.

Hog slaughter in the Union of South Africa for 1948 is estimated to be more than 21 percent larger than that of 1947. The present slaughter rate is more than twice as great as the average for the 1934-38 period. As a result, accumulated stocks of bacon and ham are taxing available storage facilities. Maximum retail prices for bacon and ham were decontrolled to assist in moving stocks out of storage. The increase in maize production, coupled with an increase in hog numbers, is expected to reflect a larger slaughter in 1949.

In 1948, commercial hog slaughter in Argentina is expected to make a nominal increase over the previous year, when slaughterings reached the lowest point in eight years. Lack of an export market for Argentine pork is perhaps the most important single factor in reducing hog slaughter and pork production in that country. Hog numbers are reported to be the lowest in some thirty years. Recent purchases by foreign importers in Europe and the



general anticipation of the resumption of pork sales to the United Kingdom, after the expiration of the Andes Agreement, have given some stimulus to the industry. A moderate increase in hog slaughtering can be expected in 1949.

In Brazil it is estimated that inspected hog slaughter in 1948 will be around 5.5 million head, or about 6 percent above last year. This number is almost twice as large as the 1934-38 average. Breeding stock losses from hog cholera in 1946 made it practically impossible to increase numbers in 1947. However, a slight increase in hog slaughter is anticipated for 1948. The number of hogs slaughtered in 1949 will depend to a large extent on the 1949 corn harvest, but with economic and climatic conditions continuing favorable, next year's slaughter can be expected to remain close to the present level of 5.5 million head.

Commercial hog slaughter in Australia for 1948 is estimated at 1.4 million head, slightly under the 1947 level and about 25 percent below the 1934-38 average. However, if the United Kingdom increases prices for Australian pork export products and adequate feed becomes available, a small increase in slaughter may occur in the final quarter of this year.

At the present time, however, the prospects for increased commercial hog slaughter in 1949 are not very encouraging, although there is a significant demand for breeding stock in some states. The present shortage of feed, high cost of grain in relation to return from hogs, continued shortage of building and fencing materials needed for hog maintenance and relatively higher returns from other farm products can be expected to affect breeding plans and prevent any sizeable herd expansion in the immediate future.

On the basis of preliminary data, inspected hog slaughter in New Zealand for 1948 is estimated to be around 615,000 head. This is only slightly larger than 1947 and about 35 percent below the average for the 1934-38 period. Since the hog industry is considered a sideline to dairying, it is unlikely that hog production will increase very substantially for some time. Continuing high prices for dairy products and by-products have caused interest and enthusiasm for hog production to drop considerably. It is expected that inspected hog slaughter in 1949 will be maintained close to the present level.

---

This is one of a series of regularly scheduled reports on world agricultural prospects approved by the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations Committee on Foreign Crop and Livestock Statistics. For this report, the Committee was composed of: Joseph A. Becker, Chairman; C. M. Purves, Elmer A. Reese, Hazel B. Kefauver, Stanley Mehr, Mary E. Long and Constance Farnworth.

HOGS: Slaughter (commercial or inspected) in specified countries, calendar year, average 1934-38, annual 1946-49

Continent and country	Average :			Preliminary: Indicated	
	1934-38	1946	1947	1948	1949
	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
<b>North America</b>					
Canada 1/	3,239	4,254	4,452	4,500	4,300
Mexico 1/	855	1,185	1,300	1,330	1,330
United States-					
Inspected	34,673	44,394	49,116	44,500	49,000
Total	57,229	76,244	74,733	70,000	75,000
Caribbean:					
Cuba 2/	270	400	385	425	350
<b>Europe</b>					
Austria 3/	-	633	877	1,050	1,350
Belgium 3/	1,949	-	-	1,200	1,500
Bulgaria 2/	134	24	-	-	-
Czechoslovakia 3/	4/ 3,644	1,736	2,572	2,415	2,875
Denmark 2/	4,355	2,043	2,031	1,749	1,900
Eire 2/	5/6 1,119	467	450	406	575
Finland 1/	7/ 216	-	-	-	-
Germany-Bizone only 2/	5/ 6,500	402	512	600	750
Hungary 2/	1,434	-	86	-	-
Netherlands 3/	2,133	880	1,100	870	1,000
Norway 1/	333	28	86	100	125
Poland 1/	4/ 6,100	1,247	2,811	3,500	4,000
Portugal 1/	225	214	255	-	-
Rumania 2/	8/ 783	82	-	-	-
Spain 9/	10/ 397	76	102	125	130
Sweden 2/	1,396	1,054	1,036	1,225	1,300
Switzerland 1/	793	270	290	300	325
United Kingdom 2/11/	5/ 5,633	1,435	801	950	1,600
Yugoslavia 2/	661	-	-	-	-
<b>Asia</b>					
Japan 2/	1,150	57	96	150	-
Philippine Islands 2/	795	387	614	700	750
<b>South America</b>					
Argentina 2/	1,240	2,149	943	1,000	1,400
Brazil 2/	2,960	5,421	5,200	5,500	5,500
Colombia 2/	594	665	580	605	-
Uruguay 2/	86	166	132	144	145
<b>Africa</b>					
Union of South Africa 2/	251	499	480	585	600
<b>Oceania</b>					
Australia 2/	6/ 1,912	1,646	1,454	1,425	1,425
New Zealand 2/	12/ 968	619	614	615	615

1/ Inspected slaughter. 2/ Commercial slaughter. 3/ Total official slaughter.  
 4/ Year 1936 only for Czechoslovakia and year 1938 only for Poland. 5/ Four-year average only. 6/ Year beginning June 1 for Eire and July 1 for Australia.  
 7/ Three-year average only. 8/ Average for years 1935-39. 9/ Slaughter in provincial capitals only. 10/ Average for years 1931-35. 11/ Great Britain only.  
 12/ Year ending September 30.

Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations. Prepared or estimated from official statistics, U.S. Foreign Service reports, and other information. Data relate to present boundaries, unless otherwise noted.